

Juicy Tidbits

What You Need to Know About Fruit Juice in Your Child's Diet Toddlers

When my toddler gets thirsty he always asks for juice--sometimes several times a day. Is this okay?

Fruit juice should be considered a food not a liquid to merely quench the thirst. Fruit juice isn't a "free food." You should limit your toddler's fruit juice to 2-3 ounces twice a day. Give milk with meals or offer water when she is thirsty.

If the fruit juice is good for her, why should I limit the amount she drinks?

When a toddler fills up on one food, she is not as likely to get the necessary nutrients for ideal growth and development that a variety of foods provides.

Juice has calories. If your toddler drinks too much juice, it could put her at risk for becoming overweight when she gets older.

Excess apple juice can cause loose stools and stomach aches because of a natural ingredient called sorbitol.

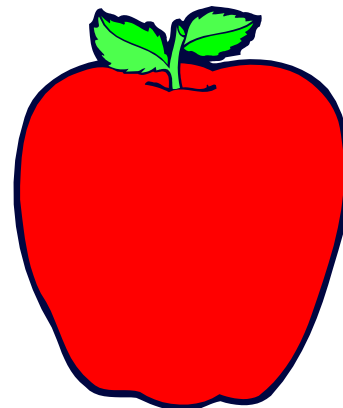
What are the best fruit juices?

WIC juices are some of the best for your toddler. When offering other juices, select those that are Vitamin C-fortified and unsweetened.



When is the best time to give my toddler juice?

Juice is best taken at a regular snack time that is not too close to meal time as it can spoil her appetite. A good time to offer Vitamin C rich juice is at breakfast when your toddler is having her iron-fortified cereal because the Vitamin C helps the body use iron.



What about those fruit drinks that are fortified with Vitamin C? Are they just as good as juice?

They are basically sugar water with Vitamin C added so they don't have any of the other nutrients that fruit juice may have. Orange juice, for example, has potassium and folic acid in addition to Vitamin C.



I drink a lot of soft drinks and I know my toddler sees me. What do I do?

You are entitled to an occasional soft drink, but you are a role model for your toddler. You can influence her in establishing good eating habits when you drink milk, juice, or water. It's good for you and good for your toddler!